THE
CATHOLIC RADICAL

"...to foster a society based on creed instead of greed..." Peter Maurin

June/July 2010 **Price: For whatever it's worth**

Nuclear Disarmament

by Frida Berrigan

In nuclear war there would be no victors, only victims," wrote Pope Benedict XVI in his 2006 *World Peace Day Message*.

Today, there are more possibilities for nuclear victims than ever before. The nine nuclear powers—the United States, Russia, France, England, China, Israel, Pakistan, India, and North Korea—have more than 27,000 operational nuclear weapons among them, enough to destroy the world many times over.

In an April 2009 speech in Prague, President Barack Obama publicly embraced the goal of seeking "the peace and security of a world without nuclear weapons." He went even farther, explaining the United States' obligation in this area. "As the only nuclear power to have used a nuclear weapon," Obama told the thousands crowded into the Hradcany Square, "the United States has a moral responsibility to act. We cannot succeed in this endeavor alone, but we can lead it, we can start it."

Despite this pledge to seek a world without nuclear weapons and recent agreements for arms reductions with Russia, the 2011 federal budget for nuclear weapons research and development is likely to be more than $7 billion. If the Obama administration has its way, it could reach $8 billion per year by the end of the decade. This steady and growing investment contradicts the White House's promising rhetoric of disarmament.

According to the authoritative *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, the United States still maintains a nuclear stockpile estimated at 5,200 warheads—of which approximately 2,700 are operational, with the rest in reserve. In addition, the administration recently unveiled its Nuclear Posture Review, which affirms a more limited but "essential" role for nuclear weapons in US national security and does not rule out "first use" of nuclear weapons. This "right" allows the United States to drop the first bomb in an atomic war, thus leaving US global dominance through military power

Brian Kavanagh

unchallenged and unchecked. Another key Pentagon document, the Quadrennial Defense Review, suggests that as nuclear reductions are completed, more powerful conventional (i.e. nonnuclear) weapons capabilities—called "Prompt Global Strike"—will be necessary.

But, to give the Obama administration some credit, there has been progress on arms reductions in the last year. Along with Russia, the United States agreed to nuclear

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Flag Day

by Scott Schaeffer-Duffy

On June 14,1969, I won a prize for an essay called, "What the Flag Means to Me." Years in the Boy Scouts informed me of the symbolism in the American flag and taught me flag etiquette. I knew red stood for the blood of American patriots, white stood for the purity of American ideals, while blue stood for the glory of her achievements. I knew you should not fly the flag in the rain or at night, as well as how to fold it smartly into a triangle. I saluted it daily in school and believed that it must never touch the ground or be held in a parade at a lower level than another flag. I had seen enough movies to know that the Stars and Stripes coming over the horizon meant rescue from harm and the restoration of justice. I was proud to wear an American flag patch on the shoulder of my scout uniform.

I was confused by newspaper images of Old Glory being flown upside down (a sign of distress) outside the crown of the Statue of Liberty by Vietnam Veterans Against the War. I was no fan of Abbey Hoffman's American flag shirt or Peter Fonda's American flag helmet in *Easy Rider*. I saw these things as disrespectful.

Then, in 1975, I read **Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee** and learned how, in 1864, six hundred Cheyenne, two thirds of them women and children, were massacred, after they sought protection under an American and white flag. When American troops questioned orders to kill even the infants, the commanding officer, Colonel John Chivington, said, "Nits make lice."

A year later, two months before the nation's bicentennial celebration, I saw Stanley Forman's front-page newspaper photo of a furious white opponent of desegregation in Boston trying to spear a black lawyer with an American flag outside

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Disarmament

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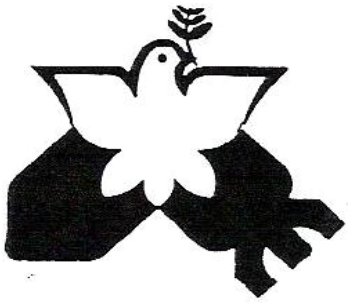
reductions called the Follow-on START Agreement (the 1991 START I treaty, between the United States and the Soviet Union, limited both countries to 6,000 long-range nuclear warheads and allowed for inspection processes). If ratified by the Senate (not a foregone conclusion in the current political climate), the new agreement will cut that class of nuclear warheads by one-third over the next seven years.

The administration is urging ratification of the Comprehensive Test Ban, which the Senate failed to approve a decade ago; has convened a Special Session of the Security Council; and brought together 42 nations in DC for a discussion on securing loose nuclear material. All of these steps, combined with the United States' active participation in the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference at the United Nations in May 2010, put nuclear weapons on the front burner for the first time in two decades.



The NPT is a big deal. Over the last eight years, the United States all but dropped out of the NPT process. Instead of treaties and multilateral agreements, the Bush administration opted to aggressively pursue the geo-politically provocative, technologically untenable, and exorbitantly expensive missile defense program as a reliable form of protection for the United States.

The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, which entered into force in 1970, set up a bargain between nuclear-haves and have-nots. The five acknowledged nuclear powers at the time—the US, Soviet Union, Britain, France, and China—committed to disarmament. They also agreed not to transfer nuclear weapons material or know-how to any other country. The rest of the signing nations committed not to build nuclear weapons or accept delivery of that material or know-how.

Nuclear weapons states have not disarmed, and more than one has transferred nuclear know-how and materials to other nations. The treaty is broken. It is not just an abstract problem—there are four more nuclear powers-Israel, India, Pakistan, and North Korea—than when the NPT entered into force in 1970.

There is an opportunity to channel the will toward disarmament into a new treaty framework that is free from the old constructs of have and have-nots. The Lawyers' Committee on Nuclear Policy and other groups have established a framework for real action towards disarmament. The "Nuclear Weapons Convention," which Costa Rica submitted to the 2007 UN meeting in preparation for the NPT Conference this spring, would simply and universally "prohibit development, testing, production, stockpiling, transfer, use, and threat of use of nuclear weapons [to] destroy their arsenals according to a series of phases."

There is much more to the treaty than these few sentences, but in essence it says: "let's build a safer world and start dismantling nuclear weapons."

The work towards disarmament is garnering a lot of attention and excitement, and providing opportunities for some interesting and (hopefully) fruitful dialogues. One example of this is the Archbishop of Baltimore's participation in the First Annual Strategic Deterrence Symposium last year. This event, hosted by US Strategic Command—which is perpetually poised to launch a nuclear attack, maintains US nuclear "readiness," and is aggressively pursuing military space assets—brought together a veritable who's-who of analysts and experts from across the political spectrum, military strategists and commanders, nuclear laboratory representatives, and administration officials. Archbishop Edwin O'Brien called for nuclear disarmament, saying that "the path to zero will be long and treacherous. But humanity must walk this path with both care and courage in order to build a future free of the nuclear threat."

He reminded those listening that decades of Church teaching emphasizes the imperative to work towards disarmament, and concluded that it "is essential to translate the goal of a world without nuclear weapons from an idealistic dream or pious hope to a genuine policy objective."

This is an important message at a critical juncture. And it will need to be echoed and magnified in the coming months and years to support the Obama administration's commitment amid a myriad of competing policy objectives, a struggling economy, a distracted and disengaged majority, and a well-organized minority of nay-sayers and Cold Warriors that see nuclear disarmament as a major threat to national security.

Let's get going! Ω

Vol 26, No. 56 THE June/July 2010

CATHOLIC RADICAL

Published by:
The Saints Francis & Thérèse Catholic Worker Community
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nukeresister@igc.org.

Standing Up for the Innocent

by Reverend Mark Seifried

Last spring, I sat on a jury for several days during a trial for an alleged child rape. At the end of the testimonies, my juror number was selected as one of two alternate jurors, which meant I was not able to be part of the deliberations to reach a verdict. I heard all the same testimony that the rest of the jury heard. They came up with a verdict of "guilty." I was sorely disappointed.

The defendant could not have committed the crime. According to testimony, the alleged rape occurred while five other people slept in the same small room, yet no one in the room could corroborate the story of the alleged victim. One person was lying less than six inches away. No one heard a peep. The alleged victim was fully dressed. By my calculations, the alleged rapist was too far away to even come close to physically performing the act for which he was accused and convicted.

Evidently, the jurors who deliberated never took human anatomy into consideration or the fact that there was no physical or other evidence of rape. The prosecutor did his best to pull at our heartstrings, so that the verdict was based more on emotion than evidence or even common sense.

The accused did not speak English. He had a Spanish interpreter throughout the trial. Although he was dressed each day in a shirt and tie, his tattoos were still exposed above his collar. He looked like a thug in bought-for-the-day department store attire. His face had sharp lines, which gave him an intense look. The prosecutor did not have to work hard to make the jury, most of whom were white and middle class, believe that this man embodied evil. The defense witnesses described someone wholly different from the prosecutor's caricature. Most of the witnesses for the defense also spoke Spanish and had darker skin than the jurors. To me, racism and classism trumped justice.

I was sick and sleepless for more than a week. A couple of weeks later, I received a call from a colleague who asked if I would sit on a committee for the Massachusetts Conference of the United Church of Christ to establish an Innocence Commission in Massachusetts. I said, "Yes."

Since then, I have learned that our jails and prisons house scores of innocent women and men. There are myriads of stories like the one I experienced. Massachusetts is one of three states in the country without an Innocence Commission.

Just in the last few years, 130 persons have been found totally innocent of their convictions of serious crimes through DNA testing. Even more wrongful convictions involve mistaken eyewitnesses, informants lying, false confessions, failures by defense attorneys, police misconduct, and fraudulent science. Without an Innocence Commission, not only are many people wrongly convicted and punished, but also, real culprits escape justice and are left free to commit more crimes.

Lynd Ward

It seems that Amos' prophecy could be directed at our judicial system: "**You have turned justice into poison and the fruit of righteousness into poison.**"

I urge you to join the Massachusetts Conference of the United Church of Christ in insisting that our elected representatives support a Massachusetts Innocence Commission. We foresee this commission promoting the following reforms:

1. Post-conviction DNA testing.
2. Scientific methods of eyewitness identification to eliminate bias.
3. Videotaping confessions to reduce or eliminate false confessions.
4. Careful evaluation of jailhouse informants to exclude those who are lying to benefit their own cases.
5. Independence of crime labs from police and prosecution, and conduct of crime lab work under direct scientific principles.
6. Blue-ribbon commissions to investigate any allegations of misconduct of prosecutors, police, or defense attorneys.
7. Standards, pay, and workload conditions of defense attorneys brought closer to those of prosecution to achieve equality in the adversarial court system.
8. Support of educational programs for police forces to promote less biased and more effective methods of investigation.
9. Any other recommendations to reduce the likelihood of convicting the innocent and allowing the guilty to avoid prosecution.

The Massachusetts House of Representatives has tabled Bill #1618 for several years. This bill would accomplish some of what we are hoping for from an innocence commission, namely to provide scientific and forensic evidence when showing good cause. We are hoping that this law will be deliberated this year and are urging the judiciary committee to ensure it does. Your help to lobby for this would be beneficial.

If you are too busy to help, please pray for us and for the innocents who perish while too many people sit idly by. As the apostle Paul declared, "**When one member suffers, all members suffer as well.**" Ω

Editor's Note: For more information about the Innocence Commission or how to join its ecumenical taskforce monthly meetings, please contact Rev. Mark Seifried at Seifried@charter.net or 508 852-0961.

Taking Away Israel's Car Keys

by Jonathan Ben-Artzi

Editor's Note: This article is excerpted from The Christian Science Monitor, *4/1/10. The author is a Ph.D. student at Brown University. His uncle is the Israeli Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu.*

More than 20 years ago, many Americans decided they could no longer watch as racial segregation divided South Africa. Compelled by an injustice thousands of miles away, they demanded that their communities, their colleges, their municipalities, and their government take a stand. As Martin Luther King, Jr. said, "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere."

Today, a similar discussion is taking place on campuses across the United States. Increasingly, students are questioning the morality of the ties US institutions have with the unjust practices being carried out in Israel and in the occupied Palestinian Territories. Students are seeing that these practices are often more than merely "unjust." They are racist. Humiliating. Inhumane. Savage....

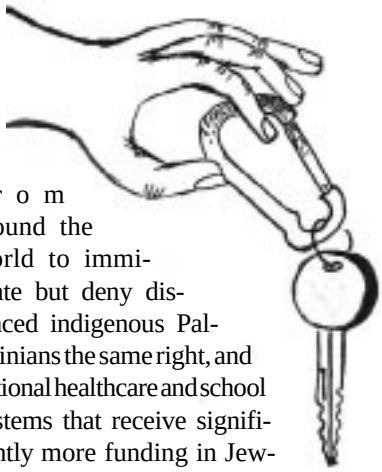
Americans are heavily involved in the conflict: from funding (the US provides Israel with roughly $3 billion annually in military aid) to corporate investments (Microsoft has one of its major facilities in Israel) to diplomatic support (the US has vetoed 32 United Nations Security Council resolutions unsavory to Israel between 1982 and 2006).

I am an Israeli. Both my parents were born in Israel. Both my grandmothers were born in Palestine (when there was no "Israel" yet). In fact, I am a ninth -generation native of Palestine. My ancestors were among the founders of today's modern Jerusalem.

Both my grandfathers fled the Nazis and came to Palestine. Both were subsequently injured in the 1948 Arab-Israeli War. My mother's only brother was a paratrooper killed in combat in 1968. All of my relatives served in the Israeli military for extensive periods of time, some of them in units most people don't even know exist.

In Israel, military service for both men and women is compulsory. When my time to serve came, I refused, because I realized I was obliged to do something about these acts of [Israeli] segregation. I was denied conscientious objector status, like the majority of 18-year-old males who seek it. Because I refused to serve, I spent a year and a half in military prison.

Some of the acts of segregation that I saw while growing up in Israel include towns for Jews only, immigration laws that allow Jews from around the world to immigrate but deny displaced indigenous Palestinians the same right, and national healthcare and school systems that receive significantly more funding in Jewish towns than in Arab towns.



Aiden Duffy

As former Prime Minister Ehud Olmert said in 2008: "We have not yet overcome the barrier of discrimination, which is a deliberate discrimination and the gap is insufferable.... Governments have denied [Arab Israelis] their rights to improve their quality of life."

The situation in the occupied territories is even worse. Nearly 4 million Palestinians have been living under Israeli occupation for over 40 years without the most basic of human and civil rights. One example is segregation on roads in the West Bank, where settlers travel on roads that are for Jews only, while Palestinians are stopped at checkpoints, and a 10-mile commute might take seven hours. Another example is discrimination in water supply: Israel pumps water from occupied territory (in violation of international law). Israelis use as much as four times more water than Palestinians, while Palestinians aren't allowed to dig their own wells and must rely on Israeli supply.

Civil freedom is no better. In an effort to break the spirit of Palestinians, Israel conducts sporadic arrests and detentions with no judicial supervision. According to one prisoner support and human rights association, roughly 4 in 10 Palestinian males have spent some time in Israeli prisons.

And finally, perhaps one of the greatest injustices takes place in the Gaza Strip, where Israel is collectively punishing more than 1.5 million Palestinians by sealing them off in the largest open-air prison on earth.

Because of the US' relationship with Israel, it is important for all Americans to educate themselves about the realities of the conflict. When they do, they will realize that just as much as support for South Africa decades ago was mostly damaging for South Africa itself, contemporary blind support for Israel hurts us Israelis. We must lift the ruthless siege of Gaza, which only breeds more anger and frustration among Gazans, who respond by hurling primitive, homemade rockets at Israeli towns. We must remove travel restrictions from West Bank Palestinians. How can we live in peace with a population where most children cannot visit their grandparents in the neighboring village, without being stopped and harassed at military checkpoints for hours?

Finally, we must give equal rights to all, regardless of what the final solution will be—the so-called "one state solution," the "two state solution," or another form of governance.

Israel governs the lives of 5.5 million Israeli Jews, 1.5 million Israeli Palestinians, and 4 million Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza. As long as Israel is responsible for all of these people, it must ensure that all have equal rights, the same access to resources, and the same opportunities in education and healthcare. Only through such a platform of basic human rights for all humans can a resolution come to the region.

If Americans truly are our friends, they should shake us up and take away the keys, because right now we are driving drunk, and without this wake-up call, we will soon find ourselves in the ditch of an undemocratic, doomed state. Ω

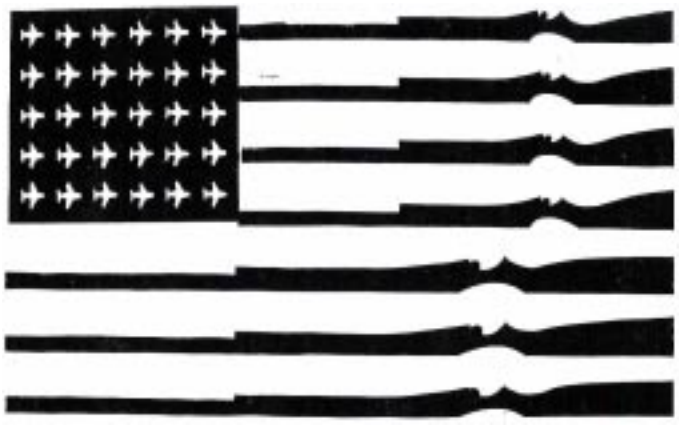
Flag Day

(Continued from page 1)

Boston's City Hall. The more I learned about US racism and imperialism, the easier it was for me to understand why some people see the flag as a symbol of oppression and violence.

At a 1984 International Women's Day protest on the steps of the US Capitol, I saw women plunge a US flag into a tub to "wash the blood out of it." Speaking to the crowd minutes later, Elizabeth McAlister said that she wasn't sure the flag could be cleansed in so a short time.

On the other hand, my experience in countries where different ethnic and religious groups were slaughtering one another, often without US instigation or arms, renewed my belief that, while not perfect, American ideals of justice have significant substance. Despite our shameful segregationist past, contemporary Americans are remarkably tolerant compared to many people I met overseas. I also began to associate the sight of an American flag, not with the US government, but with my affection for baseball, pizza, New England, family, and friends. I could see how the national symbol could mean different things to different people at different times.



Pablo Picasso, 1952

Then again, flags originated as battle standards. The ubiquitous display of the American flag during the first Gulf War connoted support for the US troops. Although some peace activists took to carrying a US flag in an attempt to wrest the symbol from the right, it largely remained emblematic of support for the war. Perhaps the best thing that can be said about any flag is that it's meaning is ambiguous.

And yet, many Catholic Churches proudly display an American flag, some right on the altar itself. I used to scoff at my leftist friends' assertion that Americans worshipped the flag as an idol, until I learned that a Connecticut Catholic school fired Stephen Kobassa, a teacher of many years, for refusing to display an American flag in his classroom and how a Worcester veteran threatened to punch any priest who tried to enforce the Vatican rule that a flag cannot cover a coffin during a funeral Mass. (So virulent was local opposition to the flag restriction at funerals that Bishop Harrington asked and received permission from Rome to exempt the Worcester diocese from the rule.) Given that Americans grow up, not only pledging allegiance to what the flag stands for, but also to the flag itself, it should come as no surprise that many venerate it. In 1898, when the American Flag Association was formed, a call went up for legislation to protect the flag, calling it a "sacred jewel" that commanded "national reverence."

My own mixed feelings about the American flag in particular, and all national flags in general, make me reluctant to demand that churches cast them out, but I was very moved by the witness of New Haven, Catholic Worker, Mark Coleville, who refused to kneel during Mass, so long as an American flag was displayed on the altar. When parishioners asked him why he kept standing during the Eucharistic Prayer, he told them that he could only kneel before God and not the state. He didn't pass out leaflets or get into shouting matches with his pastor. He didn't stop attending Mass either. Over time, a consensus emerged, and the flag was removed.

Especially nowadays, when religion is so closely associated with anti-religious policies (calling wars things like "Operation Just Cause," putting scripture quotes on US rifles, and comparing the sacrifices of soldiers, who have killed more than 100,000 Iraqi and Afghan civilians, with those of Jesus), it behooves us to be crystal clear. "**Love your enemies**" is irreconcilable with war. "**Sell everything you have and give it to the poor**" contradicts capitalism. "**Welcome the stranger**" flies in the face of restrictive immigration policies. Many fundamentals of Christianity are radically different from those represented by the American flag. While the differences between Americanism and Christianity are far from total, they are certainly sufficient to hold the flag at arm's length, away from the Church. Ω

An Easter for the Martyrs

by Michael Webster

Well, Lord Jesus,
happy resurrection day.
We call it Easter, come what may.

As You look down upon us
from on high in heaven above,
Your people below
are starving, maimed, killed, and suffer.

For Your name's sake
they lose their heads.
Some of those who live
wish they were dead.

Sorry to write all this down
on Your anniversary.
I hope You'll notice my rosary
when I fail to pray.
Please remember what I've had to say.
Come what may
on Judgement Day!
But down here there's
much too much blood
in the mud.

Are you comfortable and happy
when You gaze upon Your Father's earth,
for whatever it's worth?

Where, I wonder, is Your love for them?

When is Your promise to come around?
And walk once more upon the water and
the ground?

Don't mind me Jesus.
I'm not so mad,
just sad. Ω

Joy in New Zealand

by Jim Consedine

Sarah Young

It was a moment to savor. Two hours after retiring, the jury in the trial of the three Catholic Workers—Fr. Peter Murname OP, Adrian Leason, and Sam Land—who deflated a dome at the US military spy base at Waihopai, New Zealand, in April 2008, returned to a packed but expectant courtroom. It took less than a minute to read their verdicts. Not guilty on all counts.

The applause was spontaneous, immediate, and prolonged. It was renewed as the jury was dismissed and left the courtroom. They had played a critical part in this historic decision to acquit. In New Zealand's legal history, there had never been a decision rendered that, in certain circumstances, a higher moral law existed and should prevail over the prescribed legislation of a nation. These circumstances had been accepted by the jury as prevailing when the three peacemakers damaged the equipment and temporarily put the antennae out of action. The three follow a long tradition of Christian pacifism dating back to the earliest days of the Church.

The jury had heard seven days of testimony and legal argument. They reached their conclusion by accepting the defence argument that the action was taken to prevent further suffering from wars involving the United States.

The defence wanted to argue that the damage done to property was small compared to "the greater good" achieved by their action, which could save lives. This "necessity defence" was ruled out by the judge. What was allowed was a defence from the Crimes Act of "claim of right" because the trio believed sincerely they had the right to act as they did. The judge held they did not have that right, but agreed that there was evidence that they believed they did, hence, the moral argument that followed and the need to show the state of mind of each defendant at the time of the action. The result was lengthy testimony from each defendant.

Fr. Murnane told the court, "The trio felt strongly about the unspeakable evil caused by activities enabled by spy bases. These include torture, the overthrowing of legitimate governments, continuous war, renditioning prisoners secretly from one country to another in order to torture them, and the widespread use of depleted uranium, which has a destructive life-span of millions of years. In going into Waihopai, we wanted to challenge these warfaring behaviors. We went there to prevent further mass murder. It was both necessary and our right to do so."

The acquittal is a significant victory for peacemakers and the power of nonviolent direct action. This action is taken only as a last resort. It is based on a love of neighbor, in this case a neighbor unknown but devastated by war.

To have more than 100 peacemakers gather for two weeks and witness a trial, involving a confrontation between the nonviolence and power of Christ and the violence and power of a government lockstepping in tune to the war plans of the US military and its allies, is pretty special.

Most media reacted with surprise. Had they been present for the duration of the trial, they would have experienced little surprise. The evidence was compelling. The Waipopai base is an integral part of the US war machine and responsible for the deaths of innocent civilians in foreign wars.

One feature made a defining difference. The presence of the Holy Spirit was palpable. This court verdict was backed by prayer from religious communities, parishes, and individuals across the country. Early morning communal prayers and nightly Taize vigils were held outside the US Embassy. In court, kuia Aunty Raina Paniora faithfully prayed her rosary. A spirit of community, peaceful cooperation, sharing, song, humor, prayer, and family was built around the trial.

Everyone noticed it—and many remarked upon it. ...Some people came for an hour and stayed for a week. Collectively they formed a community of the willing, peacemaking People of God, witnessing in the capital, a stone's throw from parliament, the center of state power.

The jury had to be affected. Their verdict reflected that fact. Ω

Justice Is Up to Consumers

Editor's Note: The following is excerpted from **An Introduction to Human Geography** *by James M. Rubenstein.*

Huffy bicycles were manufactured in Ohio for more than a century... Huffy closed the Celina, Ohio plant in 1998 and moved production to Farmington, Missouri. Less than a year later... Huffy closed its US bicycle factory and [moved to] Neuvo Laredo, Mexico.... In 2001, Huffy moved production to China.

Huffy's story is not isolated... The United States lost 20 percent of its manufacturing jobs during the first 6 years of the twenty-first century....

For companies like Huffy, the changing geography of production was clearly justified by the corporate balance sheet. Huffy lost $2.2 million during the last year it made bicycles in Celina and $33.3 million during the year it made them in Farmington. In 2000, the first year of overseas production, Huffy earned $35 million.... Instead of paying workers $10.50 an hour in Celina, or $8 an hour in Farmington, or even $5 an hour in Nuevo Laredo, Huffy was able to find workers for only 25¢ an hour in China.

Ultimately responsible for the changing geography of manufacturing is the American consumer. When Huffy bicycles were made in Celina, they sold for $80. After production shifted overseas, the price came down to $40. For nearly all consumers, low price is much more important than place of origin. Ω

Letters

Dear Scott, Claire, Ken, Abby, Julia, Dave, and friends,
Thank you for the last issue of *The Catholic Radical*. Julia's interview with Fouad touched me deeply and I savored thoughts about each of you.

Kathy Kelly
Chicago, Illinois

Dear Friends,
I am enclosing a donation. I understand that like most radicals, you are pro-Arabs/Palestinians and against Israel. Well, I am the reverse. Please remember that first and foremost, Arabs want to wipe Israel off the map, to deny Israel's right to exist. When Anwar Sadat signed a peace treaty with Israel, he was assassinated. What do you do when someone is determined to kill you, no matter what? Secondly, Israel accepted the UN two state solution, but Palestinians refused—they want 100%, not 50%. And finally, Israel is the only democracy in the Middle East...

Jerry Fong
El Monte, California

Editor's Note: For Mr. Fong and others who share his assessment of Israel, we recommend Anna Baltzer's book **Witness in Palestine, A Jewish American Women in the Occupied Territories**. *Baltzer's response to the claim that Israel is a democracy is reprinted below:*

Israel is the state of the Jewish people, not the state of its citizens. Non-Jewish citizens are excluded from many things granted automatically to Jews. Palestinian citizens of Israel are largely prevented from buying or leasing 93% of the land of Israel, much of it owned by the Jewish National Fund and thus exclusively reserved for Jews. Although they pay taxes, Palestinian citizens of Israel living in non-Jewish neighborhoods receive only a fraction of the resources and services granted to Jewish neighborhoods. Palestinian citizens of Israel *are* allowed to vote, and they can even run for office, unless they run on a platform advocating that Israel become a state of all of its citizens rather than the state only of the Jews, in which case they can be disqualified. A 1989 High Court case challenging the law found that 'it is necessary to prevent a Jew or Arab who calls for equality of rights for Arabs sitting in the Knesset [Israeli Parliament] or being elected to it.' One Justice stated that a political party should be disqualified if it advocates 'a state, as all democratic states, of the totality of its citizens, without any advantage to the Jewish people as such.'

Moreover, more than one third of the people living under Israeli rule are denied citizenship and the rights and protections that come along with it, including the right to participate in the government that controls their lives. These are the Palestinians in the Occupied Territories. The government in which non-Jews in the Occupied Territories *can* participate is not allowed to do basic things like control its own people's borders, security, or finances.

It is worth noting that Israel is a democracy for Jews. In other words, Israel is an ethnocracy.

Apartheid South African was also an ethnocracy, but is now a democracy, thanks in large part to a divestment movement. The Catholic Radical *hopes to contribute to a similar transformation of Israel.*

Scott and family,
...We continue to work hard spending most of our time out in the field visiting rural villages, inaccessible by car or truck, sharing information about human rights and God's plan to have peace and justice, even for the poor. In Colombia, the average campesino continues to suffer without work, potable water, basic sanitation facilities, and electricity, while the rich continue to engorge themselves from the country's natural resource wealth. Colombian President Uribe insists that any opposition to his agenda is guerilla or Hugo Chavez-inspired, which is not true. People need jobs, schools, & healthcare.

As if the never-ending and expanding war in the Middle East was not enough, President Obama and the US military look to expand into seven new Colombian military bases, and possibly increase the number of US troops on the continent....

Eloy García
Christian PeacemakerTeam
Barrancabermeja, Colombia

Dear Claire & Scott,
Thank you for sending me your wonderful newsletter. It gives me another view on matters around the world....

Claire Cunningham
Shrewsbury, Massachusetts

Thanks for your work and the newsletter. I especially enjoyed the April Fool comics.

Alice Budge
Columbus, Georgia

Thank you for your newspaper. I enjoy reading it.... I love receiving the NY Catholic Worker newspaper too.

Mrs. P. Sullivan
Somerset, Massachusetts

Ade Bethune

Catholic Worker Calendar

June 9, 15, & July 26 — Mass: Join us in prayer and song at 7:30 P.M. 52 Mason Street. Refreshments to follow.

June 17 & July 15—Ta'anit Tzedek: Jewish Fast for Gaza Prayer/Vigil: Please join us in a Jewish prayer and fast for an end to the Israeli siege on Gaza. Noon-1 P.M. In front of Clark University on Main Street in Worcester.

June 4 & July 9—Vigil Against War & Abortion: Join us for a vigil starting outside the US military recruiting station on Park Ave. and ending across from the Planned Parenthood building on Pleasant St. in Worcester. Noon to 1 P.M.

For more information, please call: 508 753-3588 or email theresecw2@gmail.com.

Mason Street Musings

This issue of *The Catholic Radical* includes a poem by Michael Webster. Life has not been easy for Michael. Many times over the years, he has come to our door on bitterly cold nights seeking food, shelter, and a few minutes of feedback on his latest poem or sketch. At times, he has seemed so fragile that I feared for his life. Surprisingly, most of his art has been optimistic, but his latest work, "An Easter for the Martyrs," has an exhausted, borderline despairing quality. He promises me that his next effort will be more cheerful.

Many of our guests share with us harrowing stories of misfortune and injustice: violent or addicted partners who abandoned them and their children; parents who neglected or abused them; employers who cheated them; institutions which judged them by their race, religion, or immigration status; bureaucracies which humiliate them, illnesses and injuries that were never properly treated; all manner of suffering made harder to bear by a society which constantly projects a successful, affluent class of people in the media. "Why can't my life be easy too?" many ask.

Too many people like to lay the blame for poverty on the poor themselves. "If only they worked harder, drank and drugged less," they argue, "poor people could enjoy the American Dream." While I cannot disagree that some of us have made bad choices and could work much harder, I also know that what keeps people poor is more systemic than personal. In a country where wages range from $6 to $6,000 an hour, hard work is often irrelevant to success. And even those who played by the rules and worked hard for years in the middle class have lost jobs, retirement, healthcare, and homes. Small wonder many of them have flocked to angry Tea Party rallies.

Tom Lewis

Who cares enough to give them relief?

And yet, an essential part of Christ's Easter promise is a hopeful message of liberation for the poor and oppressed. Jesus tells his disciples, "**Now you are sorrowful: but I will see you again, and your hearts shall rejoice, and no one shall take your joy from you,**" John 15:22.

Unshakable happiness is God's promise for humanity. On eve of the Feast of Christ's Ascension, with a glorious spring in bloom, it's easier to be hopeful. On the poorest section of Worcester's Main Street, dozens of beautiful, flowering, fruit trees transformed the neighborhood. If such natural splendor can take root there, all manner of good could follow.

Our children also give us hope. Justin is getting his Master's degree, Grace is getting her BA, Patrick is graduating from high school, and Aiden is busy making a zombie movie and other creative art.

Meanwhile, Ken, Julia, and I went to a Tea Party rally on Boston Common to call for an end to the most wasteful government spending—the $629 billion military budget. We pointed out how it has doubled in the last 10 years, now exceeding the combined military budgets of the next 40 largest-spending nations combined. It has grown with little oversight or opposition until it threatens our nation with fiscal and moral bankruptcy. How much could we accomplish for the poor, for our children, for the struggling middle class, if we focused on human needs?

Regardless of the behavior of government, Christ's call for us remains the same: shelter, feed, clothe those on the brink of despair, and proclaim the Good News of peace. To paraphrase the co-founder of the Catholic Worker, Peter Maurin, "It's an old message that only *seems* new."

As always, we rely on your support to carry on. At this writing, we are $2,200 in debt. If you can spare something to help us, you would increase the hope we try to pass on to Michael and all who come to our door for help. Thanks and blessed summer! Ω

Scott

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